

## Acquisition of former Christian school site a big win

**By Mark Pavilons**

King Township's acquisition of the Holland Marsh Christian School is a big win for everyone.

Councillors voted to approve the move and accompanying staff report recently. The deal closed Feb. 10.

The Township is basically getting the site for nothing, in exchange for the equivalent value in development charges. The Township will also receive \$60,000 towards the future needs of the facility.

The 1.09-hectare school site is located at 19855 Dufferin Street in Ansnorveldt, and boasts 55 metres of frontage. It closed its doors in 2015 and the school has since moved to a new building on Bathurst Street.

This parcel is ideal for the Township and for Ansnorveldt. It could be used to relocate the existing public library and also be used as community space.

While essentially free, the Township is on the hook for roughly \$17,500 to offset a portion of the operating costs, from 2015 to today. The Township will ensure the necessary easements are put in place to facilitate parking and access of the neighbouring church.

The Township will address any required maintenance and operational needs right away. King staff, in consultation with the Library CEO, will start the process of evaluating future functionality and possible building scenarios. The community will also be asked to provide input into future uses and needs.

It's anticipated the options for the site include using it as is, retrofitting the building or demolition.

King's 2018 capital budget will include \$300,000 in funding for the next phase of this project.

For now, King will have to absorb the cost of operating the building, pegged at between \$25,000 and \$30,000 annually, without consideration of any potential revenue sources.

?... the Township will continue to operate and maintain the park block as part of its existing level of service for the residents of Ansnorveldt.?

Mayor Steve Pellegrini was ?delighted? at the conclusion of this deal, noting it's a win-win for everyone.

?We now have a property in Ansnorveldt we can utilize,??he said, adding he looks forward to future uses of the site.

Councillor Avia Eek admitted this has been a long time in the works. She's thrilled at the outcome, especially for her constituents in the hamlet. This is a ?great opportunity for a community hub? and it provides public space ?in the north.?